

## The mythological journey of the *Kaknus* and its place in Ottoman poetry

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Myths as a product of common culture are the stories that each culture takes and kneads within itself and conveyed for generations. The source for them is human. Myths are shaped by the culture, lifestyle and beliefs of communities. Mythology has a great place in making sense of literary texts as it is in human history. Mythological narratives and items, which have changed as a result of the interaction of different cultures with each other, are cultural accumulations whose origins cannot be determined exactly, but which are believed to be true by the society. One of the fields that divan poetry, which continues as a literary tradition, makes use of while maintaining its existence is mythology. Various mythological elements in literary works play an important role in understanding the meaning of the work. Divan poetry, mostly fed by the source of Persian mythology, also benefited from the mythological animals belonging to this culture. Among mythological animals, birds are considered as mythological elements that occupy much of divan poetry. *Kaknus*, the subject of our study, is a mythological bird with a story in both western and eastern mythology. In Greek mythology, the mythological person *Kyknos* is a bird named *Kaknus* in Persian mythology. In this study, the mythological history of *Kaknus* will be discussed and the characteristics of its use in Divan poetry will be detailed.

**Keywords:** *Kaknus*, *Kyknos*, mythology, Ottoman Divan literature, Phoenix, music

### 1. Introduction<sup>1</sup>

The myths that we can characterize as a creation story are considered sacred stories. Mythology has a great place in human history as a common belief, and each culture or society creates its own legendary and mythological past which conveys the beliefs of its origin and past. Mythology makes a hypothesis and brings it to life through belief systems. The shaping of our culture, belief, and way of life is shaped by rumors that we believe without knowing the cause or origin. The source of these beliefs is human and each evolves from age to age and from generation to generation. Man produces myths based on

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<sup>1</sup> In this article, western mythology will be used to meet Greek and Roman, and eastern mythology will mostly be used to meet Iranian mythology.

facts within the boundaries of his own mind and culture. Mythology is a world created, grown, and nurtured by humans (Eliade 1993: 15-16; Armstrong 2008: 5-6; Gezgin 2014: 7).

While Ottoman poetry continued to exist, it fed off various sources, such as religion, mysticism, epics, fairy tales, various narratives and stories. One of them is mythology. In order to fully understand the texts, it is necessary to know in what context these sources are used. In addition to his own knowledge of poetry, a poet also includes in his poems historical and cultural elements and mythological elements. In order to emphasize the importance of myths in literary works, Wellek-Warren says that “our own view, on the other hand, sees the meaning and function of literature as centrally present in metaphor and myth” (1949: 198).

Ottoman poetry texts, the mythological source of which is mostly composed of Persian mythology, were created by using culturally specific individuals, animals, and other creatures to carry their stories. In Divan literature texts, there are many mythological elements from culture. So, there is a need to look at the origin of the mythological elements of the culture in question when evaluating the texts. However, it can be seen that the content of Divan poetry does not only contain elements of Islamic eastern mythology. States that have been established in the Near East throughout history have hosted different beliefs and religions, and when Islamic culture settled, new interpretations were made on top of the remnants of the old religion and belief systems. Due to this diversity, mythological individuals and concepts may display different appearances, though their origins are similar in various cultures. With the change of the religion of people living in the Near East, it is not possible to completely destroy the information previously accumulated. This accumulated information continues to exist through metamorphosis. With the spread of the Great Roman Empire to the east, Near East culture was kneaded with Greek and Roman culture and various exchanges were made. As a result of this exchange, a versatile east-west composition emerged with the addition of those belonging to the new culture on old mythological history and beliefs. This period, dating back to the 4th century, was called the Hellenistic culture period (Tekin 2009: 181-182). In Campbell's words:

Both overland and by sea, the ways between Roma, Persia, India and China were opened in this period to an ever-increasing commerce, and to such a degree that nowhere in the hemisphere was there any longer the possibility of a local mythological development in isolation. The exchange of ideas was multifarious (1986: 288)

The culture of the Near East has influenced Greek culture mostly through stories, proverbs and thoughts. It has also led to the birth of a different type literature not previously seen in Greek culture which appeals to the taste of the people. In the Hellenistic period, the face of Greek literature changed

and a new style of literature emerged, in which stories and legends belonged to the Near East mythology. The culture, which was the synthesis of the east-west, reached Europe and North Africa with the expansion of the Roman Empire and acquired new forms by blending with the local cultures there (Tekin 2009: 182). It is certain that the Divan poetry, which is largely sourced from Persian mythology, contains traces of Greek culture and mythology. Eckard Peterich draws attention to the importance of Greek mythology in European culture in terms of study and understanding by saying “We cannot read any of our great poets without encountering Greek gods and heroes” (1959: IX). Although a much deeper study is needed in order to fully understand the interaction between them, common or similar data in both cultures show this interaction. Şenocak's statement “Mythological figures of Iranian poetry in Ottoman poetry come to life on the shores of the ancient Hellenic world. In Anatolia, East and West are intertwined with various mythological currents” (1997: 53) also draws attention to this interaction. Our aim with this study is to point out how the mythological element reflects on Divan poetry through its common points in these cultures rather than the determination of its cultural origin.

It is seen that among mythological creatures, birds, although referred to by different names, show similar characteristics in different cultures. In myths, animals can have human characteristics and appear in different shapes and have different functions regarding their appearance and abilities. Gezgin, makes the following explanation about mythological animals in her book where she discusses animal myths: “Sometimes gods are depicted in animal form or thought with their protective animals. The most important symbols of power of heroes whose names have passed through the ages are shown with animals” (2014: 8).

*Anka*, *Hümâ*, *Simurg*, *Hüdhiüd* and *Kaknus* (*Kûknûs*) are mythological birds whose stories are given in Divan poetry. Analogies are established between their characteristics and heroes. The mythology of these birds differs according to the cultures. Sometimes they show similar extraordinary features, although their names change in different cultures. The determination that the mythological story of *Kaknus*, which is our main subject, has similar characteristics in Eastern and Greek mythology, sometimes as a god and sometimes a bird, has led to the preparation of this study.

## 2. Kyknos/Cygnus in Greek Mythology

Latin *cygnus/cygnus* (and its derivatives, such as French “cygne”) and Greek *kuknos* share the same root. *Kuğu* means “swan” in Turkish. *Cygnus*, or “the star of the swan,” is also the name of a constellation in the Northern Hemisphere (Pultar 2007: 63). In addition, when the Turkish word *Kaknus* is searched in a dictionary, the description of a phoenix is sometimes given as an equivalent (Johnson 1852: 974;

Steingass 1998: 982). Grimal, in the *Kyknos* article of his dictionary, states that the word means *swan* and there are many heroes with this name; he further adds their stories as found in Greek mythology (1986: 113), according to which there are five different *Kyknos*<sup>2</sup> and the hero is raised by a swan or turned into a swan that makes harmonious sounds while dying. *Kyknos* is described in different ways, including the son of Poseidon and Kalyke, the son of Ares and Pelopeia, the son of Apollo and Thyria, and the king of Liguria.<sup>3</sup> Coleman also includes four different *Cycnus* in his work and indicates the origin of all of them in Greek: *Cycnus* is either the son of Apollo and Hyrie, of Ares and Pelopia, or of Poseidon and Calyce, and we also find a *Cycnus*, son of Sthelenus, who is the king of Liguria (Coleman 2007: 262).

In addition to the motive of the hero being transformed by God (Zeus) into a swan, the connection between the swan and music in one of the stories seems central to our topic. In mythology, *Kyknos*, the king of Liguria, is given the ability to make harmonious sounds by Apollo:

A king of Liguria, and a friend of Phaethon, *Cycnus* mourned Phaethon's death so bitterly that he was transformed into a swan. Apollo had given this *Cycnus* a beautiful voice and from this account springs the supposition that swans sing when on the point of death (Grimal 1986: 114)

The beautiful tunes the swans make while dying find therefore their origin in Greek mythology and establish the “swan-song” relationship. Coleman also mentions the same story of *Cycnus*, the music king of the city of Liguria and the son of Sthelenus, and emphasizes that he was turned into a swan<sup>4</sup> by Apollo because he was a friend of Phaethon, whom he lamented upon his death (2000: 262).

In Greek and Roman mythology the swan is known for its beauty. Aphrodite/Venus is the goddess of beauty. The animals of the carriage that Venus rides are depicted by the artists as swans or pigeons. The fact that the swan was chosen for the carriage of the goddess of beauty is a proof of its own beauty (Kam 2008: 134).

Based on these narratives in Greek mythology and the origin of the word, the relationship between “*Kyknos*-swan” and “*Kyknos*-music” can be clearly seen. The point that draws attention with

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<sup>2</sup> For more information, see Grimal (1986: 113-114).

<sup>3</sup> Three of the five different *Kyknos* have the motive of being transformed into swans, and one of them is raised by swans. In contrast, the story of *Kyknos*, who is described as the son of Ares and Pelopeia, does not include a swan.

<sup>4</sup> Phaethon, while traveling the sky with his solar carriage, was struck to death by Zeus with lightning; his death revealed *Kyknos*' hostility to fire and made him choose to live in the lakes (Bayladi 2005: 303).

this information in Western mythology is that a swan is not a mythical creature but a living animal. However, in Eastern mythology, *Kaknus* appears as a mythological bird.

### 3. *Kaknus* in Eastern Mythology

*Kaknus*, which can be seen in the sources *kaknûs*, *keknûs*, *kûknus*, *kûknûs*, *kuknûs* and *koknus*, is described as a large bird that passes in the oriental tales in the Ottoman-Turkish dictionary and makes various sounds as the wind blows in its beak (Devellioğlu 2000: 580). The reason why it is referred to as “swan bird” in some sources (Levend 1984: 182; Pala 2008: 253) can be linked to the mythological narratives mentioned above. The following explanation for this bird is found in *Mütercim Âsım*’s dictionary:

...It is a bird decorated with colorful patterns. There are three hundred and sixty holes in his nose. In the high mountain tops, sitting against the wind creates various sounds as the wind touches those holes. Hearing this sound, the birds gather next to it. It grabs some of them and eats. It is said that after a thousand years, it piles up countless timbers, rises above them and makes a wonderful sound. It passes out like a mad lover and flaps its wings. A fire emerges from its wings and burns the wood. In the end it burns in the fire... (2000: 415)

*Kaknus* is described as a bird that makes various tunes in *Mantıku't-tayr* and attracts all other animals with these sounds. It is also stated that there is no other bird that looks like it; it lives up to a thousand years and knows when it will die. When it is time to die, *Kaknus* makes good tunes, flaps its wings quickly and, at the last moment, ignites the bush under it and eventually burns itself and becomes ash. When the flames disappear, another smaller *Kaknus* emerges from the ashes. This bird is praised in *Mantıku't-tayr* for the ability to give birth after death (Attâr 2010: 209-211).

The story of *Kaknus* believed to be living in the Indian islands is similar to the stories of other mythological animals such as *Ankâ*, *Sîmurg*, and *Semender*, due to the interest in fire and the ability to be reborn from ashes after burning (Ceylan 2004: 32-33). The explanation of “Phoenix” in some of the dictionaries of Western origin, as the equivalent of the word “*Kaknûs/Kaknus*,” can be an example of this use (Johnson 1852: 982). The Phoenix, which is the symbol of resurrection after death in ancient Egyptian mythology, coincides with *Sîmurg* in Persian, *Ankâ* in Arabic and *Zümrüdüankâ* in Turkish (Eskigün 2006: 10). This bird is involved in mythology, with the ability to die many times and be reborn from its ashes (Tansü-Güvenç 2017: 785). While rebirth from ashes after being burned is a common feature of these two mythological birds, the beautiful tunes that *Kaknus* sings when close to his death and his relationship with music are features that distinguish him from the *Phoenix*. In addition, when

giving information about the *Phoenix*, the ancient sources mention a worm that appeared after his death, this also is a difference between the two birds (Tekin 2008: 425). The baby, which appears as a worm in the *Phoenix* story, appears as an egg in *Kaknus*. Besides; while Demiri is describing *Kaknus* in his work *Hayâtü'l-hayevân*, in which he includes the characteristics of animals he compiled from Islamic texts, a spark comes out when the male and female bird rub their noses together during mating, and as a result, both of them burn in the fire.. Then, it is said that the rain falling on the ash formed a wolf and this wolf formed the *Kaknus*. According to this; the sounds of the *Kaknus* made during mating caused the sparks of love to emerge, and this caused the expression of “burning with love fire like *Kaknus* being ash with its own fire” as an inspiration to the lovers (Demîrî 2011: 528). With the information given, we see the connection of *Kaknus* with fire rather than its voice in the Eastern sources. In this respect, it differs from the data in Greek mythology. When the sources giving information about *Kyknos* in Greek mythology are examined, it is noticeable that there is no variant related to burning itself and being reborn from its ashes.

In Ottoman literature, the *Kaknus* is sometimes referred to by a musical instrument: *Mûsikâr*. *Mûsikâr* is one of the old wind instruments formed by the gathering of several flutes (Pala 2008: 336). The term *mûsikî* (music) and the musical instrument *mûsikâr* were born because ancient music scholars invented this science as a result of the sounds from *Kaknus*'s beak (Pala 2008: 253).

Considering the Eastern and Western mythologies, the characteristic of *Kyknos*, who is a legendary hero in Greek mythology that makes harmonious sounds while dying overlaps with a characteristic of the *Kaknus* bird in Eastern mythology, and these two mythological beings are similar in terms of their beautiful sounds. In his work, Kam makes the following statement regarding the swan bird:

The swan is not one of the imaginary birds that are the products of the dreams of legend writers, but have no existence. It is a real bird, beautifully created to be called an elite poem of creative might. Artists sometimes have Venus' carriage pulled by a few pigeons and sometimes by a couple of swans in their paintings. According to the beliefs of the ancients, the swan would sing very harmoniously when it will die. The last work created by the geniuses close to their deaths is that the French call it '*conte de cygne*' (*swan tale*) based on this legend about the swan. This is the original word of *Kaknus*, which has passed from Iranian literature to Turkish literature (2008: 134).

The “*Kyknos*-swan” relationship in the Greek sources appears as *Kaknûs-mûsikî* in the East. The relationship of the swan with beauty and beautiful sound is in parallel with the association of this legendary bird with music in Eastern mythology.

#### 4. *Kaknus/Kaknûs/Kuknûs* in Ottoman Poetry

In line with its features in Eastern and Western mythologies, *Kaknus* is referenced to in Ottoman poetry with burning itself on fire and the beauty of its voice. In the couplets, it is referred to as the words *kaknus*, *kaknûs*, *kuknûs*, *kukinûs* and *mûsikâr*. In Divan poetry dictionaries, it is described as a bird with decorated wings and holes in its beak that lives on the Indian island. It is stated that there are three hundred and sixty holes on the face and when in the huge mountains it stands against the wind, various sounds are made when the wind penetrates into those holes. It is also added that when other birds that have heard the sounds gather next to it, *Kaknus* catches and eats a few of them. It is said that it lives for about a thousand years. When its death approaches, it makes wonderful tunes, sets a fire from its wings and it eventually burns. In the end, a baby *Kaknus* rises from the ashes. Sources state that the science of music was inspired by the sounds made by this bird (Onay 2007: 222; Pala 2008: 253).

Considering the information above it is seen that *Kaknus* in Ottoman poetry has been handled in terms of rebirth from its own ashes, making beautiful sounds, its fancy beak and living for many years. Sometimes lovers scream tunes like *Kaknus* and sometimes they burn themselves in love's flames. In the context of its relationship with fire these words "scream, ash, soil, breath, red, kebab, burn/burner" are mentioned together:

*Âteş-i 'ışka Muhibbî yana hâkister ola*  
*Nâr-ı 'ışk ile yanup nite kül oldı Kaknus*

Muhibbî (Ak 1967: 664)

"Just as *Kaknus* burned with the fire of love, Muhibbî also burns down with the fire of love, too."

*Kuknûs-ı âşiyân-ı mahabbet degül midür*  
*Kendi demile 'âşık-ı muztar kebâb olur*

Sâbit (Oener 2019: 215)

"Isn't it the *Kaknus* of the love that burned the helpless lover with his own breath?"

*İşitdük Zâtîyâ kaknûsı yakmış âteş-i âhı*  
*Meger kim yana yana okıdı bu şî'r-i pür-sûzı*

Zâtî (G. 1700/5)

"Oh Zâtî! When it read this burning poem, we heard that the fire of pain burned *Kaknus*."

When it comes to music, it makes sad sounds, cries and groans. For this purpose, it is called by the name of the musical instrument called *mûsikâr* (*mûsikâl/miskâl*). Because of this feature in dictionaries *mûsikâr*, which is mentioned as a kind of wind instrument made by connecting fifteen or twenty flutes, is used in the couplets with *tevriye* (double-entendre) by means of both bird and musical instrument (Onay 2007: 284; Devellioğlu 2000: 822; Mütercim Âsım 2000: 533; Pala 2008: 336). However, considering the knowledge that music science was invented due to the sounds made by *Kaknus* in mythology, it can also be thought that it (*mûsikâr*) was derived from the word *mûsikî* and named as a musical instrument because of the similarity between them. In some couplets, it remains uncertain whether *Kaknus* itself or the musical instrument is mentioned. In couplets about music; words such as *sürûd*, *nâle*, *nâlân*, *çeng*, *nağme*, *nevâ*, *rebâb*, *ney*, *kânun* come to the fore.

*Sâyesinde kimsenin itmez recâ âheng-i gam  
Ya'ni mûsikâr için bâl-i hü mâ lâzım değil*

Şeyh Gâlib (Okcu 2011: 485)

“The melody of sorrow does not hope to be in anyone's shadow, the wing of the *hü mâ* (phoenix) is not needed for the *mûsikâr*.”

*Benümle nâlede dem-sâz olur mı mûsikâr  
Ki âteşin nagamâtümle neysitân tutuşur*

Seyyid Vehbî (Dikmen 1991: 560)

“Can *mûsikâr* be companion with me in wailing? The reeds catch fire from my burning tunes.”

*Rebâb-ı nâleyi kânûn-ı ‘aşka uydurup ey dil  
Nevâ-yı nağme-i ‘uşşâkı mûsikâra göstersek*

Seyyid Vehbî (Dikmen 1991: 594)

“Oh heart! If we show the *uşşâk* tunes to *mûsikâr* by keeping the moaning reed in love *qanun*.”

*Ko cengi çeng-i ‘aşkun n’eydügin bilmezsin ey vâ’iz  
Ne ra’nâ söyler ol çeng ile mûsikârı tuymazsın*

Bâkî (Küçük 1994: 344)

“Oh preacher! Give up your war, you don't know what the love reed is and you don't hear how beautiful that reed and *mûsikâr* sing.”



The feature of rebirth of *Kaknus* from its own ashes was also handled by the poets of the Divan poetry. According to mythology, the sparks emerge when it kicks its wings over the wood it has collected when it feels it is close to death, then a great fire emerges and causes it to burn in that fire. Christians have adopted the appearance of a new egg emerging from the ashes as a symbol of rebirth (Hançerlioğlu 2011: 758).

*Umaram hâkisterümden ide bir ‘âşık zuhûr  
Olmayam gayretde eksük ‘Âşıkâ kaknûsdan*

Âşık Çelebi (Kılıç 2017: 106)

“Oh Âşık! I hope (after I die) a lover falls from my ashes, I do not want to be missing from *Kaknus* in the effort.”

*Bulmaz hayât kaknus-ı dil yanmadıkça ten  
Âbisten oldu beççeye muşt-i remâdımız*

Hâzık (Güfta 1992: 272)

“Unless the skin burns, the heart does not come to life, a handful of ashes conceived a baby.”

When *Kaknus* is compared to a pen, the words or writings of the poet are described as “fire.” In this context, the words *âteş*, *âteş-feşân*, *od* refer to the effect of the words poured from the pen of the poet. At the same time, reference is made to the musical authority with the double-entendre use of the word *sûznâk*:

*Yine feyz-i bahâr-âşûb cünbiş saldı murgâna  
Yine kaknûs-ı hâmem cilveden âteş-feşân oldu*

Lebîb (Kurtoğlu 2017: 78)

“The abundance that stirred the spring gave the birds a rampant again, and the *Kaknus* of my pen again sparked fire with a twist.”

*Gören hâmem sanur kaknûs minkâridur ey ‘Âşık  
Sözüm odlar saçar âfâka şöyle sûz-nâkem ben*

Âşık Çelebi (Kılıç 2017: 105)

“Oh Âşık! If *Kaknus* sees my pen, it thinks its beak. I am so touching that my words burn fire to horizons.”

*Sûznâk eş'âr yazamaz ey Celîlî kîlk-i şevk  
Belki minkâr-ı zebândan od saçar kaknûsveş*

Celîlî (Kazan Nas 2018: 139)

“Oh Celîlî! The eagerness pen cannot write effective poems, but maybe it burns fire from its beak like *Kaknus*.”

The Sun can be identified with *Kaknus* due to its color, heat and constant movement in the sky. With this interest, it is described as the “the golden winged *Kaknus* of the sky” in the couplet below. The image of the Sun, in the shape of a fireball is compared to *Kaknus* burning itself completely inside its nest:

*Âteşîn-dem olmada kaknûs-ı zerrîn-bâl-i çerh  
Kendi de olsa aceb mi şu'lesi içre kebâb*

Fehîm-i Kadîm (Felek 2007: 566)

“Since the golden winged *Kaknus* of the sky has a breath of fire, is it surprising that it reflects in its own fire?”

Due to the connection of *Venus*'s carriage being pulled by the swan in Western mythology, there are couplets in Divan poetry where *Zühre* and *Kaknus* are used together. The council filled by *Zühre* with burning melodies is a home of fire for *Kaknus*:

*Her şerâr-ı nagme-efrûz etti bezm-i zühreyi  
Kuknûs-ı 'aşka âteş lâne kim gönlümdür ol*

Yümnî (Onay 2007: 222)

“Every spark that shines in a tune has made *Venus*'s council into house full of fire to the love *Kaknus*, which is my heart.”

It is seen that *Zühre* (*Venus*), who was dreamed of as the musician of the sky, was mentioned with the *mûsikâr* in some couplets due to her interest in music:

*Mevsim-i 'ayş u tarabdır şeb-i 'îd irdi diyü  
Mutrib-i çarh eline aldı meger mûsikâr*

Bâkî (Küçük 1994: 66))

“As if the season of eating, drinking and having fun and the night of the holiday came, the musician of the sky took the instrument in her hand.”

Venus is the brightest star. It is easily identifiable because it is brighter at night than other stars. Its brightness is evident until the Sun rises. In the couplet below with the use of euphemism, the words of the mouth are coincided with the flame of *Kaknus* and it is stated that their rise to the sky will bring fear to *Zühre* just like the rising of the Sun, because the *Sun* will reduce the brightness of *Zühre*:

Çıkdı kürre-i 'arza eder zühreyi lertzân  
Âteş saçılır tu'me-i kûknûs-eserimden

Lâedrî (unknown poet)

“My food, which has an effect like *Kaknus*, rises into the sky by flaring fires and frightens *Zühre*.”

## 5. Conclusion

Mythological elements play an important role in understanding the literary texts of the culture they belong to. Mythological stories, which are mostly born and shaped as a common cultural product, may change according to the culture to which they belong, and over time, gain different qualities.

Animals hold great importance mythology. Sometimes animals that are in a godlike position have the ability to speak, shape shift and have various other supernatural features. In Eastern mythology the *Kaknus* bird, which burns itself in fire with beautiful tunes and is reborn from its ashes, appears as a mythological hero in the West, called *Kyknos/Cygnus* in Greek mythology. Although there are various variants related to *Kyknos* in the narratives of this culture, some of them are similar to the characteristics of *Kaknus* in Eastern mythology. In Greek mythology, there is a hero named *Kyknos*, who, after he was very upset with the death of his friend *Phaethon*, was turned into a swan by *Apollo*, who gave him the ability to lament and make harmonious sounds. In other versions, there are motives that turn the hero into a swan, or are grown up by a swan. The swan is featured in Greek mythology with its color and beauty. The animals of the carriage that *Venus* rides are depicted as swans because of these features. In Eastern mythology *Kaknus* is instead seen as a bird, not a hero. The story of this bird, believed to have lived for many years, is that when it feels it is about its time to die, it burns the wood it previously collected with a spark ignited by the beating of its own wings and eventually it burns itself completely and is then reborn from its own ashes. In Greek mythology *Kyknos* is a legendary hero who was later turned into a swan, a legendary bird known for its beautiful tunes when it died in the East. The striking point here is that the figure depicted in the West is an animal that exists, a swan; on the contrary, in the East it is a bird that never existed.

In Islamic sources, in addition to being referred to as swan, it is said that it has colored feathers and in this respect, it differs from the stories of Greek mythology, where it is described as being white. In Greek mythology, *Kyknos* stands out because of the harmonious voice that was given to him, while his interest in fire in the East is more prominent. In *Kyknos* articles of Greek mythology sources, a feature related to “fire” or “burning” could not be determined. In the stories, although the motive of “being punished with lightning strikes” is mentioned, this is not a feature of *Kyknos* directly. In contrast, in the sources of Eastern mythology, *Kaknus* is featured with fire-related qualities such as flapping its wings, sparking, burning itself and being reborn from its ashes. Poets in Ottoman poetry give place to *Kaknus* with the features such as sparking, burning itself, rebirth from ashes, having harmonious voice, relationship with music, its beak and living for many years. In the context of its relationship with music, it is seen that poets frequently give place to musical terms and create various literary works with them; because of its rebirth from ashes, they have included words about burning and colors that remind fire.

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